

THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—Cooper.



DISTURBED IN THE STRAWBERRY GATHERING.

THE GREAT VAN BROEK PROPERTY.

CHAPTER XIV.—AN UNEXPECTED LETTER REACHES GEORGE NEVILLE AT THE PARSONAGE.

It was at a later hour than usual that the family at Acton Parsonage rose from their beds on the morning after the donation party. The minister and his wife and daughter had assembled in the breakfast-parlour before George Neville made his appearance; and Andy, the minister's serving-man—an importation from the Emerald Isle—who had just returned from the post-office with the letters and newspapers, was directed to

go to Mr. George's room and tell him that breakfast was waiting.

"And here, Andy," said Mr. Upton, selecting a letter from three or four others that lay on the table, "give Mr. George this letter. It's from New York," he added, speaking to no one in particular; "at least, it bears the New York post-mark. I didn't know that George was acquainted with any one in New York. It must be a private letter, favoured by some passenger from England, who has detained it since the English mail arrived four days ago, and who has at length slipped it into the post-office in New York. Very silly practice, for

the sake of saving twenty-five cents postage, to run the risk of having the letter miscarry or lost altogether, to say nothing of the penalty incurred, and the fraud perpetrated against the post-office. Still people will be penny wise and pound foolish to the end of time."

While the minister was delivering himself of this monologue Andy O'Hara had gone to George's room, and tapped at the door.

"Who's there?" cried George, in a sleepy voice.

"Sure it's meself, Mither George; Andy O'Hara, sure," answered the serving-man. "The mather bid me tell yez that breakfast bes waitin', and it's eight o'clock."

"Well, I'm getting up," said George, somewhat sulkily, as people are apt to speak when suddenly aroused from a pleasant slumber, and springing out of bed as he spoke. "You needn't have thundered at the door in that fashion. Say that I'm dressing, and will be down-stairs directly."

"Sure I only tapt oncest, and that so gintle it wouldn't have killed a fly," said Andy. "But ye must come to the doore, av ye plaise, surr: I've got a letter for yez."

"A letter for me! From whom? I received letters from England by the last mail, only four days since. Another European mail cannot have arrived."

"Troth, it's meself wouldn't know where it came from, surr, betoken, I haven't opened the letter; and av I done so, it's not the slivers ov handwrite I'd be afther r'adin'. But I heard the minister say that it was from New York, surr."

"From New York! A letter for me from New York!" cried George, throwing his dressing-gown over his shoulders, and opening the door. "It must be a mistake."

He received the letter from Andy, bade him assure his aunt that he would be down in a very few minutes, and returned to his dressing-table.

"It bears the New York post-mark, at all events," he soliloquized. "I don't recognise the handwriting, and I don't know a soul in New York, that I'm aware of. It can't be from my cousin Ellen. I've never seen her, and why should she write to me? Besides, it's unmistakably a man's hand; and I'm sure the petroon, as they call him, wouldn't write to me, a total stranger. Well, at all events, I've no duns to dread on this side the Atlantic," he said, with a smile; "so here goes to solve the mystery."

He tore open the envelope, opened the letter, glanced at the signature and shook his head, and then proceeded to read the contents of the epistle.

The letter was very brief—only a few lines. Nevertheless, it seemed to require a great deal of study; for it was not until he had read it three times over, with many manifestations of astonishment, that the young man laid it aside, and proceeded hurriedly to finish his toilet.

"It's strange," he muttered to himself the while: "I had no idea of such a thing. There will, however, be no harm in replying to it. But I'll first hear what my uncle says."

In a few minutes he descended to the parlour, where Mr. and Mrs. Upton and their daughter were already seated at table. The minister had waited for him before commencing morning family prayers, after which he asked, "Have you any fresh news from home, George? I saw that you had a letter from New York this morning, and, as I never heard you say you had friends there, I suppose it is a letter from England posted in that city?"

"No, sir," replied George. "It is a letter from New York."

"Ha! then you have some acquaintances there; some English friends, I suppose?"

"No, sir; I am not personally acquainted with anybody in New York. The letter is from a total stranger, whose name I am still unacquainted with."

The minister and his wife and daughter looked at the young man with surprise, when he handed the letter in question to his uncle, saying—

"I wish you would read it, sir, and tell me what you think about it. I will be guided by your advice, though I dare say its contents will astonish you, as they did me."

Mr. Upton put on his spectacles and read the letter.

"Dear me!" he ejaculated. "Is it possible? I had no idea—I am perfectly astonished." Then, looking up over his spectacles at his nephew, he asked—

"But is it as the writer states, George? Or is it a mistake? Of course, though, it's a mistake. He has mistaken you for somebody else. Though your name is not a common one."

"Nor are there two George Nevilles in Acton, New Hampshire, uncle," said George. "It is right enough. I plead guilty to the count."

The minister pulled off his spectacles, polished the glasses, replaced them, and stared at his nephew with an expression of bewildered amazement that was ludicrous to contemplate. George could hardly refrain from laughing, but, remarking the equally amazed looks of his aunt and cousin, he said—

"You can read the letter aloud, if you please, uncle, and then I shall be obliged to you for your opinion as to the course I ought to pursue."

Mr. Upton read aloud as follows:—

"Chatham Street, New York, Sept. 10th, 1852.

"If the author of the excellent and well-written letters on the present political position of Europe, sent to the 'Broadway Gazette,' over the signature of 'George Neville,' and published in the 'Gazette'—in compliance with the author's especial request—without signature, would feel inclined to accept an engagement on the New York press, he may obtain such an engagement if he will write immediately to the proprietor or editor of the above-mentioned journal; or it would be more desirable if he will favour the proprietor or editor with a personal interview at his earliest convenience. The proprietor and editor of the 'Gazette' deem it advisable to explain that the engagement of which they speak does not refer to their own journal—the staff of which is completely filled—but to a new journal which is about to be started immediately; a connection with which may prove advantageous to the writer of the letters in question.

"George Neville, Esq.,

"Acton Parsonage, New Hampshire."

Mrs. Upton and her daughter still seemed bewildered; but the minister said—

"Is it possible, George, that those letters on European politics, of two columns each in length, which have appeared weekly in the 'Gazette' for the last three weeks, are yours?" The "New York Broadway Gazette" and the "Boston Courier" were the only secular newspapers to which he subscribed.

George nodded assent.

"I remember," the minister went on, "how pleased I was with the views of the writer, and with the perspicuity of his style, when the first letter appeared. You recollect, my dear" (to Mrs. Upton), "that I said to you that I recognised a fresh hand on the 'Gazette'? And you, George! Why, you sly fellow, I asked you to read the first letter aloud to your aunt, after I had read it myself. I had no idea that you were the writer."

"I don't suppose you had, uncle," said the young man, with a smile.

"What put it into your head, George? How came you to write to the 'Gazette'? So admirably well, too! Have you ever written for the press before? But you must have done so."

"I have sometimes written for the provincial press in England, sir," replied George, "but solely for amusement. It was merely to occupy my leisure that I wrote to the 'Broadway Gazette.' I had no ambition—no thought, indeed, to become a professional writer. In fact, I didn't think I had sufficient knowledge or ability. The question now is, what would you advise me to do in this matter?"

"Well, my dear boy," said the old gentleman, "I hardly know what to advise. You know you have a small independence of your own, which saves you from the necessity of accepting employment which is unsuitable to you. Still a young man like you ought not to be idle, and if you have both inclination and ability—as it would appear—for employment of the nature that is offered, if I were in your place I would accept it. You can give it up at any time if it should prove distasteful to you, and it will afford you, at any rate, an excellent opportunity to study the nature of our institutions and the character of our people. Mind you, I don't tell you to accept the offer. Use your own judgment in the matter. If, indeed, I were speaking solely for myself, I should advise you to decline it, because I don't want you to leave us yet. I had hoped that you would remain with us, at least, through the winter. But use your own judgment, my dear boy."

"The income I derived from my father is a very small independence, uncle," replied George, with a smile; "and when, on my poor father's death, I accepted my aunt's invitation to pay a visit to America, I came with no intention—if I remained in the country—to remain in idleness. The writer of the letter, however, speaks of a new newspaper to be started immediately. What sort of a paper will it be, I wonder?"

"I should say it is an election paper, George," said the old gentleman; "a class of newspaper peculiar to the United States. They are started on the eve of a presidential election, especially with a view to support one of the party candidates through thick and thin. Sometimes, if successful, they are continued after the election is decided; but, as a general rule, they cease to exist at the close of the struggle. However, the 'Broadway Gazette' is one of the most respectable newspapers in America—though not, perhaps, one of the most popular, as it eschews that scurrility in regard to its political opponents which is too common in our American newspapers, and is, I regret to say, too much relished by the great mass of our people. I should think the recommendation of the 'Broadway Gazette' would be, therefore, a sufficient guarantee of the respectability of the paper in question. Consequently, I say again, my dear boy, use your own judgment."

Mrs. Upton and her daughter, who had by this time begun to comprehend the nature of the conversation between the minister and his nephew, were not at all satisfied with Mr. Upton's advice. They did not like the idea of George's leaving them to go to New York, though Mrs. Upton was soon brought to entertain a reasonable view of the matter.

Not so cousin Mary.

"I say it is a great shame to leave us, George," said that young lady, "as if you were weary of our society. I should think the editor might find plenty of stupid people in New York to write for his paper. Besides,

cousin George, you *positively* can't go to New York for weeks to come. You wouldn't tell stories, and break your promises? And you know that you promised to accompany me to Deacon Willis's 'apple-paring' next week, and to take me to Mrs. Parton's 'quilting-bee' on the Thursday of the week after, and I heard you make several other engagements that will occupy your time for weeks to come."

"Those promises were made conditionally, under reservation, cousin Mary," replied George, smiling at his cousin's petulance. "Besides, they may pack me back to Acton. Who knows? I may not suit. Or the employment may not suit *me*. The offer may be one that I may be unwilling even to accept. All these matters have to be taken into consideration, my dear cousin."

"I hope they won't make you an offer at all. I hope they will pack you back again," replied the young lady. "What induced you to go and write these letters to the newspapers? It's really too bad, George. I call it shameful."

"But you know, my dear," said Mrs. Upton, "George will have an opportunity to see his cousin Ellen, and that will be something. He will be able to write and tell us how Ellen looks, and all about her. And then New York is not so very far off but that he can come and pay us a visit now and then. I would rather he'd remain with us through the winter; still I wouldn't stand in the way of his advancement. So we must, I suspect, make up our minds to part with him for a short time, if he thinks it best."

Thus it was settled that George Neville was to reply to the letter he had received, and was to start for New York—provided the answer to his letter proved favourable—early during the ensuing week. And then the party rose up from the breakfast-table, and separated, to pursue their several avocations. George retired to write his letter to the editor of the "Broadway Gazette;" the minister went to his study; and Mrs. Upton and her daughter had occupation enough for the day in stowing away the presents they had received from the donation party, and in setting the house in order after the confusion created by the inroad of the previous day.

CHAPTER XV.—HOW ELLEN UPTON BECAME MRS. JULIUS VAN BROEK.

THE marriage of Julius Van Broek with the daughter of a New England country parson had been stigmatized as a "romantic affair" by those who were jealous of the young country girl, who had gained what they regarded as so great a prize in the matrimonial lottery. George Neville had heard the story at different times in his conversations with his cousin Mary, and he too was fain to confess that there was a touch of romance in the affair, which was brought about in this wise:—

The village of Acton, though beautifully situated in one of the most picturesque parts of the White Mountain district, was not, for some inexplicable reason, often visited by the tourists, who were accustomed to resort in great numbers, during the summer season, to other and much less eligible spots in the vicinity. Early in the preceding spring, however, a stranger had taken up his residence at a farmhouse about half a mile from the parsonage, and equidistant from the village and the mountains, to enjoy the sports of shooting and fishing free from the frivolous observances of etiquette in dress and such-like matters which are too apt to be maintained at American watering-places and country retreats, even when the visitors have come

professedly to enjoy the immunity from such observances of fashion that the country, and the mountains and forests, or the sea-side, are supposed to afford. The advent of a stranger, with the manners and appearance of a gentleman, to a place so secluded and so rarely visited by strangers as Acton, of course created no little curiosity amongst the farmers and villagers. It was soon generally known that the stranger's name was Van Broek; that he had been many years abroad in far-distant climes, and had lately returned to America to claim and take possession of vast estates in New York State; in fact, that he was no less a personage than the patroon Julius Van Broek, who had not long before been the subject of so many interesting paragraphs in all the newspapers of the country, and whose wealth had, as is always the case under such circumstances, been unduly magnified.

Several attempts were made to cultivate the patroon's friendship by the more ambitious among the farmers; but, though he was civil to all whom he met by chance, in his excursions to the mountains, Mr. Van Broek rather held himself aloof from the people of the village, and seemed to prefer to ramble in solitary freedom where-soever he listed. He had, however, attended the village church on the two Sabbath days during which he had been at the farmhouse, and only on those occasions had he been seen by any of the members of the minister's family. The season happened to be an uncommonly early one; the weather was warm, and the wild strawberries, which grew in abundance in the valleys, were more than usually abundant. One morning Ellen and Mary Upton, the two daughters of the minister of Acton Church, went out strawberry-gathering, a favourite recreation among the girls of the village. Usually, however, the girls took with them on these occasions a male companion, as a safeguard in case they should fall in with bears, which animals are, as I have heretofore observed, remarkably partial to wild strawberries, as well as to wild honey, which they will run any hazard to obtain. Indeed, they have frequently been known, so great is their fondness of honey of any kind, to make an inroad upon the domestic beehives in the farmyards and gardens of the villagers to get at their favourite food when wild honey has failed them. To protect them, therefore, from these animals, and from snakes, and other unwelcome denizens of the glens and valleys, the girls of the village had been in the habit of taking with them on their strawberry-gathering excursions a male companion, and of going in large parties. In later times, however, the bears had been shyer than usual. Years had elapsed without more than one or two of these animals having been seen, and these had been found only by hunters who had penetrated deeper than usual into the solitudes of the mountains and forests; and the young women, and even the children of the village, had grown less cautious and timid, for it was generally believed that the bears and other wild animals had been frightened away into the less accessible mountain fastnesses. Thus it was with Ellen and Mary Upton. They had risen at an earlier hour than usual, and had gone out alone. Attracted by the abundance of the fruit on an elevated plateau on the mountain side, the surface of which was so covered with the berries that it glowed with crimson in the early morning sunshine, they ascended to the plateau, which was almost surrounded by dense "bush," and commenced to fill their baskets with the ripe, fragrant fruit, chatting merrily with each other the while. Suddenly they were startled by a loud crash, and, springing up from their stooping position, were terrified to behold a large she-bear advancing, growling,

towards them, followed by two young cubs that seemed to be but a few weeks old. The young girls uttered a loud shriek, and took to flight. The bear pursued, her eyes glaring like living coals, and in her terror Ellen stumbled over a root, and fell to the ground. Mary stopped, and stood utterly paralysed with fright, unable to help her sister or to save herself. The bear, growling savagely, rose on her hind-legs, and in this attitude approached the prostrate girl, who fancied already that she felt the hot breath of the savage beast upon her cheeks, and felt herself encircled in its terrible crushing embrace. She said afterwards that she was perfectly conscious the whole time, but was unable to move a limb, or even to breathe a prayer. She resigned herself to inevitable death.

At this moment the report of a gun was heard, the sound reverberating among the mountains as if a hundred pieces had been fired simultaneously. A bullet whistled past, within a few feet of the cheek of the younger sister, and penetrated the lower jaw of the bear at the moment when she was raising her powerful fore-legs to pounce down upon her prey, and hug the victim in her deadly grasp. A gentleman in a hunter's costume pushed through the bush and sprang towards the two girls, both of whom were now senseless with terror, when the bear, which had dropped, but which had only been momentarily stunned by the bullet, rose, and, with the blood dripping from her broken jaw, rushed with a roar of pain and fury upon her assailant. A bullet from the second barrel of the hunter's gun penetrated the chest of the infuriated brute, and she staggered and fell dead at the stranger's feet; not, however, before she had inflicted a frightful wound on his left shoulder with her terrible claws (for she was within a few feet of him when the second shot was fired), and had thrown herself upon him as she fell, bringing him to the earth with her.

"Two capital shots for a novice in bear-hunting," said the stranger as he rose to his feet, after having disengaged himself from the weight of the prostrate brute. He lifted Ellen to her feet, but, finding that she was too faint to stand, he supported her with his right arm. The girls soon came round, and were profuse in their thanks to their preserver, and in their praises of his courage. Then, for the first time, they saw that his left arm was hanging nerveless at his side, and that his shoulder was bleeding.

"You are severely hurt, sir?" said Ellen, anxiously.

"I have got an ugly scratch," said the hunter, "but I don't apprehend that it will prove anything very serious."

He strove to make light of the wound, though his pale face and compressed lips showed the pain he was suffering. The two girls bound up the wounded arm with their handkerchiefs, and the hunter—in whom they recognised Mr. Van Broek, the gentleman they had seen in church—assured them that he was quite able to escort them home.

"I must have the hide of that shaggy brute as a trophy," he said; "but I can't wait to strip it off now. I must send my man to get it for me."

The two cubs, just able to walk, were meanwhile sniffing and whining over the dead body of their dam.

"It seems a pity to harm these young things," said the hunter, "but they'll pine and starve to death;" and, raising his gun by the barrels, with his right arm he killed each of the cubs with a slight blow from the stock.

"We must leave them all where they are for the present," he added; "but the fur of the cubs will make each of you ladies a muff, whereby to remember your fortunate escape."

The gentleman and the two young ladies returned together to the parsonage; but by the time they reached the house the gentleman's arm had become fearfully swollen and inflamed. The pain of the wound was excruciating, and he was so ill that he found it out of the question to proceed to the farmhouse where he lived. A surgeon was sent for, and he was put to bed at the parsonage; and, though the swelling was soon reduced, and it was discovered that the wound was not positively dangerous, a month elapsed before he was able to leave his room. He would have gone home to his lodgings, but neither the minister nor his wife would hear of his quitting the parsonage until he had quite recovered his health.

During that month of pain and illness Ellen Upton (who, though equally beautiful as her sister, possessed an entirely different style of beauty; Ellen being a dark-eyed brunette, like her mother, whom she resembled in her gentleness of disposition, as well as in person; while Mary resembled her father, and was of a livelier and more mercurial temperament than her younger sister) assisted her mother in nursing the invalid. She read to him, played music to him, and sought in every way to amuse him and to lessen the tedium of his confinement. Though much the young lady's senior in years, Mr. Van Broek was a handsome man, still in the very prime of life; and it is therefore nothing wonderful, under the peculiar circumstances that brought them together, that a mutual attachment sprang up between them. Omitting the tedious and common-place, often nauseating, details of a love-story, suffice it to say that, within six weeks of the day on which they had met on the plateau on the mountain side, Julius Van Broek and Ellen Upton were betrothed to each other, with the full consent of the parents of the young lady. The minister and his wife had objected at first. They had thought the disparity of fortune, as well as of years, too great; but Mr. Van Broek said he had fortune enough for both himself and his bride; and Ellen declared that she cared nothing for the disparity of years; for Mr. Van Broek, if older than herself, was youthful in appearance, and as healthful and active as she. So the minister and his wife were induced to give their consent. The minister made the necessary inquiries, and found that the statements of his son-in-law elect were truthful. A fortnight later the marriage was quietly celebrated in the little village church, four young village girls being chosen as bridesmaids, and the minister himself officiating at the ceremony.

Thus it came about that Ellen Upton became, in her nineteenth year, the wife of Julius Van Broek. It was a great match for the daughter of a plain country village parson; and many of the young ladies of the village, as well as many ladies of loftier pretensions, envied the, in their opinion, fortunate bride. Shortly after their marriage the bride and bridegroom departed on a tour to Niagara, Newport, and Saratoga Springs, and on their return settled down in New York, or rather, I should say, at Stuyvesant House, Brooklyn Heights, until the new mansion that was in progress of erection at Van Broek Manor should be ready to receive them.

TRADES UNIONS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WORKING MAN'S WAY IN THE WORLD."

II.—STRIKES FROM THE STRIKERS' POINT OF VIEW.

Most persons are probably of opinion that they have heard and read enough, and too much, concerning "strikes." In most ears the word is one of ill omen,

and one is apt to associate with it the ideas of able-bodied idlers lounging about, disputing, quarrelling, rioting, and disturbing the peace of the public, while their wives and children are starving in their famished homes. And, knowing for a certainty, as we do, that want and misery are almost invariably the concomitants of a strike, and remembering the old proverb that "half a loaf is better than no bread," we marvel that men can be so infatuated as to refuse what is offered them because it comes short of what they have been accustomed to receive. We recall the experience of the past, and the lugubrious histories which, so far back as thirty or forty years ago, filled the columns of the newspapers with details of heart-rending suffering, and spread a mingled feeling of indignation and sympathy throughout the whole community. We think of the loss to the nation from the stoppage of industry, and the loss to the workers themselves from the deprivation of wages; and, believing what has been told us of the almost invariable non-success attendant on these violent measures, we blame all who take part in them, and we heap rebuke and opprobrium on the heads of those who are the leaders, and who, according to the general opinion, are interested in producing and prolonging the dissatisfaction which lies at the root of the quarrel between masters and men.

Such, at least in part, is the common view of the subject of strikes; the view, that is, which is taken by the outsiders who are not personally interested, and perhaps also in some instances by employers who have not been at the trouble of looking far below the surface. But it is important to know also what is the point of view from which the Unionist workman himself looks upon the same measure. It would be absurd to imagine for a moment that the working man has any pleasure in the prospect of a strike. He knows too well what a strike signifies to look forward to it without feelings of concern and apprehension: he sees in it an assured source of personal discomfort, and of occasions for self-denial which he will not be able to shirk; he knows that he will have to put up with short commons, possibly with real hunger for bread, and that he will have to see those who are nearest and dearest to him undergoing the same privations, and that for an indefinite period. Therefore he is not likely to be led by the nose by interested agitators, if there were any such seeking to seduce him: he will not concur in a strike unless fully convinced of the justice and the policy of the step; and though, even if he do not concur, he must, if a member of a Union, partake in the measure, he is only compelled to do so by the votes of the majority of the society to which he belongs, and with whom, in the common interest, he is bound to co-operate. He does not, however, by any means, take so gloomy a view of the strike as the non-participating part of the public do. He knows that, like war and battle to a nation, the strike is the *ultima ratio*, to be had recourse to only when all other means of settling a dispute have been tried and have failed; and by his delegates he will diplomatize as long as he can honourably do so, in order to prevent what he can but regard as a dire necessity. But when, in his view, the necessity declares itself unmistakably, he is ready to meet it, and does meet it with an apparent cheerfulness and unconcern which often appear to outsiders altogether unaccountable. The reasons for this are various, though not obvious to the lookers-on. In the first place, the Unionist does not read the history of strikes as other people read it. According to his idea, a round number of the earlier strikes, although their originators wanted experience to guide them, failed of entire success only because they were undertaken

without sufficient grounds, or without the necessary preparation—or were not backed by the general consent of the working community, or supported by the Union fund; and at the same time he sees, or conceives that he sees, that, although they ostensibly failed in accomplishing their avowed objects, they yet, as regards most of them, succeeded in securing other objects scarcely less desirable. He reads the annals of strikes, not from "The Times" newspaper, or the philosophic pages of quarterly reviews, but from the columns of some working-class organ conducted to assert his inalienable rights. There he is informed that, as a rule, so far from failing of their objects, strikes, when righteously inaugurated and managed with ordinary prudence, are pretty sure to be crowned with success in a greater or less degree. In perusing the list of them during the last fifteen or twenty years, he finds that the number of successes more than quintuples the number of failures; and in the course of his reading he will hardly fail to remark that the proportion of successes to failures is increasing steadily year after year—a fact which he attributes, and doubtless with good and sufficient reason, to the superior tactics and organization of the Union forces at the present day, compared to what they were in times past. He is prepared to find, so long as the strike shall last, that the voice of the public is against him; while well-meaning philanthropists warn him that he will have to accept the masters' terms after a vain struggle with penury and want. He has a charm against such predictions in the records of the successes of others: he knows that in one trade in Glasgow five strikes out of six proved successful between 1852 and 1858; he knows that the masons of Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Edinburgh won the day in their struggle for increased pay, or for shorter hours, in 1860 and 1861; he remembers that the strike of the London carpenters defeated a lock-out, and aided in increasing wages ten per cent., and that the same success attended that of the London builders. In short, against the comparatively few defeats the Unions have suffered within the period of his recollection, he can set off a long list of triumphs. At the same time he thinks that, though he may be temporarily cast down, he cannot be crushed, because he is backed by abundant funds, in provident hands, and by the good wishes not only of all Unionist workmen, but also of all the non-Unionists as well, whose interest in the success of the strike is as great as his own. So he submits to the present adversity, in the confident expectation of a compensating prosperity in the future.

Such is a true statement, we believe, of the feelings and views of "strikers" themselves. We do not think, however, that, in general, the workman who engages in a strike, and is idle for weeks or months together, shares Mr. Harrison's opinion on the subject of the "supposed" loss of wages, or that he ought to share it. Strikes being invariably determined by the men, and not by the masters, the instances must be very exceptional in which they are contemporaneous with the masters' determination to stop or to diminish production; and it can only be in such instances that the loss of wages, commonly attributed to the strike, would not in reality be due to it. It is very well to argue from general principles, and to say, "in the language of economists," that the wages fund is a definite portion of capital, and must be paid to the workman sooner or later: that is an excellent theory on paper, and serves to round off one's reasoning in a manner quite satisfactory to the logical faculty; but we more than suspect that in practice it is little better than a fallacy. Money is apt to take wing in any

direction where it may be useful in making more money; it cannot be caged in a wages fund, nor is there any miraculous property in money destined for wages that makes it a fixity; and it may happen, as it has happened before now, that when a strike is over the wages fund has become so attenuated that half the claimants upon it have to flit elsewhither. Again, Mr. Harrison says, strikes are usually succeeded by extra production and labour, which nearly equalizes the rate of wages during the whole period (of idleness and work); but how that can be true in the face of the fact that the Unions have suppressed overtime, it is not easy to conceive—unless it is meant that the extra production employs a greater number of hands, in which case it is not the individuals who have suffered by the strike that get the compensation. No; from what we know of strikes, they are a positive evil, inflicting a positive loss on the workman, a loss not to be explained away or neutralized by a figure of speech, but a real deduction of income, which is the price the striker pays in advance for the concession, whatever it may be, which he has in view.

The current notion with regard to the objects of strikes is, that they are invariably entered on for the purpose of raising wages and practising extortion upon employers—a notion which has helped not a little to bring Unionism into disrepute. In truth, although the forces of Unionism may be, and frequently are, brought into action to obtain a higher rate of wages, that is very far from being the only, or even the chief object which Unions have in view. What they aim at is the doing away with all abuses which beset the workman, and, which hedging him round with difficulty and disrespect, prevent him from maintaining his independence. The greatest of these abuses is the fluctuation of wages, which too many employers seem to think they have a right to control in their own interest. On this part of the subject we shall quote Mr. Harrison's words:—

"At first sight," he observes, "nothing seems more natural than that wages should vary with the price of the product. The principal objection, however, against the sliding scale of wages and prices is, that it associates the workman directly with the gambling vicissitudes of the market. To do this is to destroy one of the benefits of civilization and the social justification of large capitals. It is of vital interest to society that the actual labourer should have a regular, and not a fluctuating means of subsistence. As he can save but little, he has no reserve to stand sudden changes; and sudden loss or stoppage of his wages means moral or physical degradation to him. He has not the education or the means of foreseeing, much less of prevailing against, the wider influences of the market. The great gains and the great losses naturally should fall to the share of the capitalist alone. He and his order can act on the state of the market, and are bound to watch and know its movements. Society is bound to protect them only on condition that they perform this function satisfactorily. But to let every little vicissitude of the market fall directly on the mere labourer, who knows nothing about it, and cannot affect it if he did, is simple barbarism. In such a state of things the capitalist abdicates his real post and becomes a mere job-master or gauger. He associates his helpless workmen in every speculative adventure. He leaves them to bear the effects of a glut which his recklessness may have caused, or of a foreign war which his prudence might have foreseen. Every fall in the price of wares, fluctuating as this is from a complication of accidents, mulets the labourer suddenly of ten, twelve, or fifteen per cent. of his living. How many middle-class families could stand this every quarter? To the

labourer, who has no reserve, no credit, and no funded income, and who, by the necessity of the case, lives from week to week and from hand to mouth, it means the sacrifice of his comforts, of his children's education, of his honest efforts. There was truth in the words of the old puddler at the recent conference: 'He knew no reason why working men's wages were to be pulled to pieces to suit the foreign markets.' Capital, in fact, would become a social nuisance if it could only make the labourer a blind co-speculator in its adventures. . . . A merchant will not give his accountants more than the average salaries of his business. He does not, however, walk into his counting-house and tell his clerks that, having lost a ship which he forgot to insure, he reduces their salaries ten per cent."

There is no escaping the force of these arguments. Looking to the predicaments of the labourers, it is undoubtedly just and right that, as a general rule, their wages should be regarded as a fixed element in the cost of production; not to be subjected either to variations in prices of material, or to other vicissitudes of the market. It is idle talk to say this cannot be done: it is done in the case of the engineers, "who form a branch of the iron trade subject to amazing fluctuations," but who "have been paid at the same rates now invariably for more than ten years." The London builders furnish another case in point. Their wages, until the recent rise of ten per cent., had undergone no change for about as long a period. A more striking example than either is afforded by the printing trade in London and the large provincial cities, where a uniform scale has regulated wages during a period of some two generations. This example is the more valuable from the fact that there is no existing trade in which there have been changes half so great, either in prices of wares or in the amount of production. Within the last five-and-twenty years the cost of type has diminished about fifty per cent.; by the recent alteration of the excise laws paper has fallen in value about fifteen per cent.; machinery has added enormously to the means of multiplying impressions; and, in the midst of all these changes, each one of which might be supposed to countenance, if not to justify, a demand on the part of the workman for a higher rate of wages, no such demand has been made, but wages have stood still, and the public has had the full benefit of the changes which time has brought about, and which have reduced the expense of printing and of the products of the press, averaging them all together, by fully one-half.

These examples, and if it were necessary many others might be adduced, show that it is the tendency of a fair fixed wage, not only to satisfy the workman, and abolish agitation and strikes, but to promote the prosperity of those industrial callings in which such fixed wages prevail. Like all general rules, however, this one must be open to exceptions. In the course of years it may and must happen, especially in regard to industries based more or less upon the state of our commerce with foreign nations, that in order to accommodate wages to profits, without which manufactures could not be carried on, the rate of wages must suffer a reduction. It cannot be expected that masters will work on at a loss for any length of time, paying ready money to their men for the production of goods which will not realize their cost in the market. Such emergencies should be met in an amicable spirit by the men. As an example worthy of imitation, we may cite the case which occurred at the North Shore Mills, near Liverpool, some eighteen years ago. As the proprietors of the mills were working at a serious loss, Mr. North called his people together and

explained the state of things. He showed them that in the circumstances it would not do the masters any good to have the men working short time, but that a reduction of ten per cent. in the wages would enable them to get on. He put the question, "Will you agree to a temporary reduction of ten per cent.?" The answer was given in three hearty cheers, testifying to a unanimous and willing consent. At the same time an assurance was given that at the earliest possible moment this ten per cent. should be restored—a pledge which was honorably redeemed by Mr. North. We quote this as an instance of the feeling which ought to prevail between employers and employed, and, not knowing whether the men who so acted were Unionists or not, give it for what it is worth.

On the other hand, it may come to pass, at no distant period, that the purchasing power of money may seriously diminish. Some of the causes that may conduce to bring this about are already in operation, and have been so for years. There is more of the circulating medium in the hands of the public now than there was, proportionately to population, in times past, even before the one-pound notes disappeared. Concurrently with the increase of money, which may be laid to the account of the gold-diggings, there has been a gradual rise in the prices of provisions, in rent, and in house property, and this exclusive of such rises of price as may be fairly attributable to accidents, however portentous, like the cotton-famine and the cattle-plague. It may be affirmed with tolerable certainty, that but for the free trade in corn, which was contemporary, or nearly so, with the discovery of the Australian gold-fields, and which, by steadying the price of bread, which rules all other prices, influenced in like manner the general market, the advance in the cost of all other necessities would have been much greater than it is at the present time. But the tendency to a general rise of prices is unmistakable; and it is pretty certain that, if the promise of to-day is borne out in the coming years, there will have to be an "accommodation of wages" to subsistence, which will necessitate the entire revision of the existing rates of pay; for it were absurd to suppose that the labourer can be justly recompensed by an amount of coin which has lost a fourth, or a third, or even more, of the purchasing power it possessed when his wage was originally agreed on.

LEOPOLD I, KING OF THE BELGIANS.

PRINCE LEOPOLD, of Saxe-Coburg, replied to the deputation from the National Congress of Belgium, when it appeared in London, and offered to him the crown of that kingdom, in these words: "Human destinies offer no nobler or more useful task than that of being called upon to maintain the independence of a nation, and to consolidate its liberties. I accept, then, gentlemen, the honour you have conferred upon me." Such language was worthy of the Prince and of the occasion, and accords with that he had previously used at a preliminary conference at Claremont. "My whole ambition," he there said, "is to contribute to the happiness of my fellow-creatures. From my youth up I have been thrown into positions so difficult that I have learned to consider power but under a philosophic point of view. I have no desire for it but to enable me to do good—a good which will be permanent." The career of Prince Leopold, as a monarch, amply fulfilled the prognostications raised by such sentiments. He succeeded in healing the wounds caused by revolution in Belgium, and in consolidating the liberties which the people had acquired.

Courageously, firmly, and yet with moderation and tact, he guided the little kingdom through the shoals and quicksands of Continental politics, and preserved it from its own factions. He developed to an extraordinary degree its commercial resources, and, by identifying himself in every way with the interests of the nation, and exercising a rule at once strictly constitutional and paternal, he endeared himself to his Belgian subjects, while he achieved a unique position as the general arbiter and peacemaker among the powers of Europe. A monarch so sagacious, and of integrity so marked, leaves to his successor the richest of all legacies. Happily, Leopold II professes earnest desire to imitate the virtues of his sire. The sentiments expressed by him on ascending the Belgian throne do honour to himself not less than to the memory of his father, and give large promise of a prosperous reign. "Succeeding to-day," he said, "to a father so honoured in his lifetime, so regretted after his death, my first engagement before the elect of the nation is to follow religiously the precepts and examples which his wisdom has bequeathed to me, and never to forget what duties are imposed upon me by the precious heritage. In mounting the throne my father said to the Belgians, 'My heart knows no other ambition than to see you happy.' These words, which his entire reign has justified, I do not fear to repeat in my own name. God has deigned to grant the wish which they then expressed: may he listen to it this day, and render me the worthy successor of my father; and I beseech him, from the bottom of my heart, to continue to protect my dear Belgium."

Leopold George Christian Frederick, the late King of the Belgians, was the third and youngest son of Francis Anthony Frederick, late reigning Duke of Saxe-Saalfeld Coburg, and was the brother of the late Duchess of Kent. He was thus uncle of her Majesty Queen Victoria of England, as he was that of the late Royal Consort Prince Albert. Born in 1790, he was fortunate in both his parents. His father was a man of great intelligence, culture, and political sagacity, and his mother a woman of varied accomplishments, fine taste, rare elevation of mind, and great strength of character. Prince Leopold, accordingly, was well educated, and distinguished himself by his varied attainments in science, literature, and art, and had, indeed, the reputation of being one of the most accomplished princes in Europe. Entering into active life at a time of great convulsion, he shared in the disasters which attended the advance of the French into Saxony in 1806. The Castle of Saalfeld, in which his father, Duke Francis, in enfeebled health, with his family had taken refuge, was stormed. Prince Leopold, then in his sixteenth year, remained by his father's bed-side until his death, which occurred in December, and was the support and comfort of his bereaved mother in the time of her sorrow, and in the ruin which had befallen the fortunes of her family.

At length, free to enter upon active duty as a soldier, the young Prince joined the Russian army, in which he soon afterwards attained the rank of general, a favour which he doubtless owed to the marriage of his sister to the Grand Duke Constantine.

The peace of Tilsit, in 1807, restored to the Saxe-Coburg family the hereditary possessions wrested from them by the arms of Napoleon. In 1808 Prince Leopold undertook the government of the principality during the absence of his elder brother. Returning, however, soon afterwards to Russia, he stood by the side of the Emperor Alexander during that monarch's interview with Napoleon at Erfurt. As protector of the Confederation of the Rhine, the French conqueror required

the Coburg princes to resign their commands in the Russian and Austrian armies; and, bowing to necessity, Prince Leopold retired for a time to Coburg, and then travelled in Austria, Switzerland, and Italy. By observation and the study of political institutions during his travels, he enriched and matured his mind until the eventful year of 1813, when Germany as one man arose against the destroyer of its liberties. Recalled to active service, he commanded a Russian corps at the battles of Lützen, Bautzen, and Leipsic. At Leipsic he especially distinguished himself, performing during the four days of severe fighting prodigies of valour. Having taken a like conspicuous part in the battles which followed, he entered Paris with the allied sovereigns on the 13th of March, 1813, and also accompanied them on their visit to England. Then it was for the first time that he saw the Princess Charlotte, and was so fortunate as to attract her regards. A strong mutual attachment sprang up between them, which ultimately issued in Prince Leopold being the accepted suitor of the hand of the Princess. Having been naturalized as a British subject, and created Duke of Keadal, the Prince was married to the heiress to the British crown on the 2nd of May, 1816. The estate of Claremont, in Surrey, was purchased for the royal couple, and Marlborough House, Pall Mall, was assigned for their town residence.

An allowance of £60,000 a year was settled jointly on the Prince and Princess, with a stipulation that, in the event of the Princess dying, the annuity of the Prince should be reduced to £50,000. As the husband of the heiress-apparent to the British throne, his domestic conduct was in the highest degree kind, good, and exemplary, the consequence of which was that he won general respect and esteem at a time when English royalty was not remarkable for either the refinement of its pleasures or the loftiness of its virtues.

This union of true affection, which was largely productive of domestic happiness, and which seemed fraught with good to the nation, was, alas! destined to a sudden termination. On the 6th of November, 1817, the Princess expired in child-bed. The grief of the bereaved husband was deep and poignant. Withdrawing himself from all public concerns, he continued to reside at Claremont, in strict seclusion and retirement, for many years.

During this period of retirement, and to divert his mind from sad recollections, Prince Leopold took a journey to Scotland, and, among other places, visited Abbotsford. Great preparations were made to receive him by the authorities of Selkirk. Professor Lawson, of the United Presbyterian Hall, turned out at the head of his students. Struck with the appearance of the aged pastor, and hearing of his excellences, the Prince entered freely into conversation with him. "I am happy to have had an interview with your Royal Highness," said the Professor, "not only on your own account and because of your connection with the Princess Charlotte, but especially because of your alliance with the Electoral House of Saxony, and your descent from ancestors who made so many invaluable sacrifices in defence and propagation of the Protestant faith. To them Luther, in the hour of his need, was much beholden for protection and assistance." The Prince replied, "Since I came to Scotland I have received many compliments on account of the Princess, but this is the first I have received on my own account, and that of my ancestors."

Scott, who entertained the Prince at Abbotsford, thus speaks of him, in one of his letters: "The Prince seems melancholy—whether naturally or from habit, I do not

pretend to say; but I do not remember thinking him so at Paris, where I saw him frequently, then a much poorer man than myself—yet he showed some humour, for, alluding to the crowds that followed him everywhere, he mentioned some place where he had gone out

After 1814 Belgium formed the southern portion of the kingdom of the Netherlands, and comprised about nine thousand two hundred square miles. The names of the Netherlands and the Low Countries, by which it is often historically mentioned, have been derived from



Leopold I

to sport, but was afraid to proceed, for fear of 'bagging a boy.' He said he really thought of getting some shooting-place in Scotland, and promised me a longer visit on his return."

Greece, in 1830, was erected into a separate kingdom. The offer of the crown to Prince Leopold called him forth once more from his secluded life. He accepted the crown conditionally, and then relinquished it, because of the obstacles that opposed themselves to the independence of Greece. Another kingdom, however, that of Belgium, in the same year required a ruler, and, fortunately for the interests of that country, as for those of Europe, Prince Leopold was available for the exalted office.

their relative situation with respect to High Germany, or, as some say, on account of much of its territory lying lower than the sea. Formerly the whole of Holland and Belgium was, like Germany, divided into little principalities; but, by a series of conquests, treaties, and intermarriages, it finally fell under the rule of the house of Burgundy. The male line in this family becoming extinct, Mary, the sole heiress, transferred her dominions to the house of Austria in 1477. Subsequently the seventeen provinces were united into one State by Charles V, Emperor of Germany, who enacted that in future they should all be governed by the same sovereign. This enactment, however, was designed not to be perpetuated; for the bigotry and tyranny of his son, Philip II, to whom

he bequeathed the sovereignty of both them and Spain, caused the seven Dutch provinces to revolt, and to form the famous Union of Utrecht. After a severe struggle for liberty, they were declared a free and independent State in 1648, by the Treaty of Munster. The other ten provinces continued subject to the crown of Spain till the death of Charles II, in 1700, when they were transferred to the German line of the Austrian family. From this period till the close of the war in 1814, this country might be said to be the battle-ground of the European continent; but at the end of that time all the provinces were erected into one independent State, and placed under the guardianship of one king. In 1830, however, fresh troubles broke out, which, after much confusion, terminated in Holland and Belgium being declared distinct kingdoms, governed by different sovereigns. In the October of this year a provisional government was appointed, and in December it was announced to the Congress in Brussels that the allied powers of Europe had recognised the permanent erection of those provinces into a separate State, under the name of Belgium.

The throne of this little kingdom was soon offered to, but declined by, the Duke of Nemours, son of Louis Philippe of France, when a new election became necessary. After a few months of terrible anarchy, during which fierce and formidable riots took place at Antwerp, Brussels, and Liège, on the 4th of June, 1831, the National Congress at Brussels, after a long discussion, elected Prince Leopold King of the Belgians, by a majority of one hundred and fifty-two to fifteen votes. In consequence of some repugnance on the part of the Belgians to comply with the terms of the great powers of Europe regarding the territories of that State, the Prince declined the crown, but was subsequently induced to accept it conditionally, on the 26th of the same month. All difficulties, however, at length removed, on the 21st of July, the chosen of five millions, he entered in royal state his capital as King of the Belgians. After the ceremony of the inauguration, a banquet was given by the King, to which the members of the Constituent Assembly were invited. His Majesty sat between two citizens of the newly-created country, and drank "to the future of Belgium." The guests received the toast with enthusiasm: the crowd outside seized the happy omen, and shouted "*Vive le Roi! Vive la Constitution!*" till the streets of Brussels echoed and re-echoed with the cry. For the first time in history the Belgian people welcomed a monarch of their own choice: for the first time the Belgians were admitted as a free people into the family of European nations.

From the day of the ascension of the Belgian throne by King Leopold, the state of Belgium has been one of continued progress and improvement. Small in one sense, it is yet large in another. It is the only kingdom on the Continent that possesses a complete railway system—the work of King Leopold—as it is the most densely populated in Europe. After a successful reign of thirty years, the Belgians in 1861 held a national festival in honour of the King of their own choice and election. It was in every respect as worthy of the people as it was honourable to the sovereign. As a wise ruler, the Belgians had clung to him as warmly as they cling to their institutions and their nationality. Unanimously the representatives of this free and contented people agreed to address King Leopold on his entering upon the thirtieth year of his reign, and on the occasion the language made use of had a marked political significance. After congratulating the King on the thirty years of peace and of prosperity—the invariable concomitant of

peace—which the country had enjoyed under his sway, the Chamber declared that, to destroy the tie between him and his subjects, it would be necessary to tear from their annals the life of a generation. The Constitution, although new, had taken such firm root that it seems as if it had lasted for centuries. In the address the designs of France were denounced by a rhetorical figure which affected to believe them impossible. "There are political crimes," says the address, "which enlightened nations have not to fear. In the centre of the civilization of Europe as she now is, governments do not trample under foot all that the human conscience respects. . . . Attempts are not made to assassinate a nationality full of life, and strong in its good right, in universal esteem, and in the solemn engagements of all Europe. . . . Belgium has had long enough experience of foreign domination. . . . Her head will never again bend beneath a yoke which she detests, and has for ever broken. In the hour of peril her courage will not be allowed to remain isolated. The faith of treaties, the interest and independence of Europe, are not vain words. A cause to which no honest men of any country can remain indifferent will never be in danger of perishing or of lacking defenders."

To these sentiments his Majesty replied, "There cannot be a finer sight than the unanimity of a people forgetting all distinctions in love for their country. That sight you afford me to-day, and I am deeply moved by it. For a nationality to be solidly established, it must answer not merely the interests, but the sentiments also and the habits of a nation, and offer it political and social elements which have always been the objects of its wishes. An impartial examination of the state of the country will prove that it has obtained what it had so long desired. It has liberty with public order, security with the strictest legality; it has made the most remarkable progress in the sciences, the arts, and industry; and at the same time its wealth, so admirably developed, is, for the first time, exclusively reserved for its children. History shows us that our beautiful provinces have often been the cause of great wars: more than any other part of Europe they have been watered by the blood of nations, without having their political position definitively decided. In face of these difficulties incessantly recurring, Europe thought that, by confiding your existence to yourselves, that so long-needed end would be achieved. You have, to your great honour, solved that question: the task which Europe confided to you has been accomplished. You are accordingly on the best terms with all powers, and enjoy the most friendly relations with your neighbours. Strong in these honourable results of our independent existence, let us hope that Divine Providence will continue its protection to us, and let us never forget the motto the country has adopted: 'Union is strength.'"

Such language does honour to a patriotic people and a wise king.

In the evening the monarch was present at a banquet given by the Provincial Councillors, when he gave expression to the following sentiment: "When a country, by its patriotism, has conducted itself with such wisdom through such difficulties and trials, its future is certain. Let me hope that those former years will remain engraved on your memory, as they will eternally on mine."

The only break in the even tenor of satisfaction and contentment which characterized King Leopold's reign was caused by the revolutionary storm which swept over Europe in 1848, and which shook to their foundations so many Continental thrones. When the tidings reached Brussels of the outbreak at Paris, and the flight of

Louis Philippe, the Democratic party gathered head and raised the cry for a republic.

Clear-headed and collected, Leopold was equal to the crisis; and, seizing the right moment, by rare tact and disinterested conduct, he succeeded in turning aside the wave of revolution just as it touched his kingdom. "Have a republic if you like," he said in his speech to his people; "but do not have a violent revolution. I never asked for the crown. You gave it to me of your own free will. I am ready to resign it whenever you choose. Only say the word 'Resign,' and I will depart without putting you to the trouble of erecting barricades."

The declaration put an end to revolutionary ideas in Belgium. Even the most disaffected united with their fellow-citizens in the general expression of loyalty and attachment.

Although for a considerable period of his life afflicted with a painful malady, King Leopold had an iron constitution. He underwent much bodily fatigue, especially in walking, and, to the dismay of his attendants, used to think little of twenty or thirty miles. Not more than a year ago, it is said, on good authority; that, while shooting at his château in the Forest of Ardenne, he might be seen for six hours a day on ten successive days tramping through the snow and defying fatigue, although he had then entered his seventy-fifth year.

Belgium is a limited constitutional monarchy, and the succession is confined to the direct male line to the exclusion of females, and in default of a male heir it is lawful for the king to nominate his successor. In opening the Belgian Parliament King Leopold expressed his intention to encourage manufactures and commerce, in conjunction with the most perfect civil and religious liberty; and that this royal promise has been completely redeemed has been sufficiently shown in the flourishing condition of the country and the contentment of the people.

In 1832 King Leopold married as his second wife Louise Marie Thérèse, Princess of Orleans, eldest daughter of Louis Philippe, King of the French, by whom he has three children, the eldest of whom, Leopold Louis Philippe, born April 9th, 1835, a Belgian by birth, is now King of the Belgians under the title of Leopold II.

To the new monarch the Emperor Napoleon, immediately after the death of King Leopold I, despatched the following remarkable telegram, which may be taken as an assurance that Belgium has nothing to fear from her powerful neighbour:—"The Empress and myself sympathize most deeply in the affliction which has befallen you. Your august father always displayed great affection towards me, and I always entertained for him the same feeling. King Leopold was renowned for his great intelligence and wisdom. He was one of the most justly revered monarchs of Europe. I hope that on the throne you will follow the great example bequeathed by your illustrious predecessor. On every occasion I shall be happy to give you proof of the affection I feel for you."

TAKEN BY THE BRIGANDS.

II.

SOMETHING like a fear that we had friends in the expected convoy no doubt had its effect on the brigands. They do not like the look of soldiers, and they must have known that the carriage containing the new coinage for the Neapolitan States would be well guarded. We were quite sure that they were well aware, by some means or other, that this money was on its way to the prefecture;

and in the first instance they had doubtless imagined ours to be the vehicle. We were now all desired to come into the cavern, and we directly obeyed. I cannot tell why, but from this time I felt sure that our lives were safe; but my husband did not share my feeling, and this was not to be wondered at, weakened as he was by recent illness and nearly blind. Seeing how deep was his distress, I asked my gaoler to allow me to go over to him and speak to him.

"He is nearly blind," said I, "and he has been very ill, and I am all he has."

"No!" thundered the unfeeling fellow: "if you attempt to leave my side, you are a dead woman," at the same time drawing the pistol again from his belt. All my lately-acquired courage well-nigh forsook me, and the first tears I had shed flowed from my eyes; but they did me good, and I soon recovered myself.

The cavern into which the brigand now conducted me was large, and furnished with a good bed in one corner, by the side of which was the image of the Madonna, with a light burning. Two or three very uneasy chairs were round about a rough-hewn table in the midst, and all around, partly concealed by natural fissures in the rock-like earth, were huge boxes and barrels, doubtless filled with the goods of which many travellers had been robbed. Seated at the top of this rude table by the brigand, who placed himself by my side, my real troubles were now about to commence.

"You must drink, signorina," said he, "and then you must sing for me."

Sing! when every nerve of me was trembling, when I could see my husband, his head bowed over his hands, and the big tears of helpless sorrow pouring through his fingers! it seemed impossible. I assured him, and with truth, that I could not sing; neither could I at that time. I saw his fierce eyes, I may say, glaring at me for refusing, and I said—

"Signore Capitano, I cannot drink, and I cannot sing, because I am not well. Do not keep us here away from our families and our homes. You have all we can give you: permit us to proceed on our way, I entreat you," clasping my hands; and with the thought of our situation I lost my calmness, and, with a high voice and look far from amiable, I said again—for my patience was quite exhausted—"I will neither drink nor will I sing at the command of a brigand!"

I soon had cause to repent my temerity. Rising from his seat at my side, he took hold of me, and, pressing me with brutal force on to my knees, he held my clasped hands with one of his, and, drawing a revolver from his belt, and putting it near to my heart, he said—

"Obbediti mi; se no, con questo io voglio stendervi al suolo, corpo inanimato!"

All became dark before my eyes; but I did not faint, and I remember to have had a wish to tell the man that I would do what he wished; but my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth, and a dreary wish for my mother, from whom I had been of course much separated since my marriage, came over me; but I recovered myself, and, with a great cry, my mind seemed to revive to a sense of my fearful position. Whether the brigand thought I was dying or not I do not know; but he let go my hands, and I then, clasping them together, cried out in the words I had often heard my husband say when in trouble, "Oh, Madonna del Carmine! oh, misericordia!" when, lo, in one moment I was raised from my kneeling position, the revolver was replaced in his belt, and the brigand was on one knee at my feet! The change from great peril to safety, from death to life, was so sudden that I was dazed, and I was awoke to my full senses by

my husband running to me as if to take me to his heart, when he was rudely pushed away by the brigand, and told to go to his seat like a schoolboy.

The brigand, as I said, knelt on one knee at my feet, and, taking up a glass of wine, presented it to my lips.

"Why did you not tell me you also worshipped our Lady del Carmine?" pointing to the beautiful cameo on his tall felt hat: "you would have saved yourself much pain. But drink," said he, "drink, and I too will drink with you."

I felt very little inclined to the wine, for fear it was drugged, and I suppose my face said as much; for my husband, who was still within hearing, said by signs on his fingers, "Drink, Lavinia, for my sake." My trembling hands could scarcely hold the glass to my lips, but I drank, and the wine revived me, and did me good. This seemed to please the brigand much, and he again said, "Why did you not call on her?" pointing to the Madonna on his hat, and most devoutly crossing himself. This man, who five minutes before would have shed my blood without a tremor of the hand, was now serving me on his knees. I felt more composed. But the terrors of those moments can never be described; for, added to my own fear of a violent death, when the revolver was pointed at me, I saw my husband struggling with one of the brigands in his vain endeavours to get to me, under some insane idea of being able to rescue me. I say that my sufferings may not be told, but must be left to the sensitive reader. Even now, in the night, when I wake and all is silence around me, the whole scene is reacted in my mind, until a cold chill comes over me, and I drive the fearful vision away. The shock which my husband received he never recovered; for, added to other ills, it made me a widow.

The brigand now asked me if I was sufficiently recovered to sing for him. I had learned wisdom. I therefore told him I was ready to try to amuse him; and, knowing the sort of *furor* that all the Neapolitans feel for the famous song "*Tipeti tupeti tapete*," I commenced singing, and finished it amid the *vivas* and plaudits of every one of the brigands.

"The signorina must drink a glass of wine, and must give a *brindisi*" (a toast), said the Capo.

I thought a moment, and, anxious to show him that I was not afraid, I took the wine, and, amidst a deep silence, said—

"Bevo alla salute della nostri onesti e valorosi gioventà Italiani" (I drink to the health of our brave and honest Italian youths).

"Viva, viva la signorina Inglese!" said all; and I was obliged, after much hesitation on my part, saying I was too fatigued, to sing again. And I cannot give you a greater proof of the esteem with which Garibaldi is held, even by these brigands, than the fact that, when I sang "*Camicia rossa*" (The Red Shirt), they made the old cavern echo with their plaudits. I thought by this time that I had done enough, and, worn out as I was by the different scenes of the last few hours, I very respectfully submitted to the Capo that we should be allowed to depart; but he insisted that I should sing an English song. I therefore sang the English words to an air from "*I Puritani*," in which he joined, his fine tenor voice giving great beauty to the music, which, in other scenes and in another situation, would have been a real treat.

At last my singing was finished—Italian, French, English: I had sung in them all, and I began to feel the effects of the excitement through which I had passed. "E adesso cosa vuol la mia regina della Festa," said the brigand. I asked him if he would allow me to say

what I wished. "Sì, signora; adesso sono io le suo servo."

"Bene," said I. "Now that I have done all that you wished me, I pray you to allow us to go in peace."

"You have not yet given me a keepsake," said he, taking my hand and looking at my rings; for I was unlucky enough to have on some of value. He took from off my finger my mother's parting gift, saying I was the bravest girl he had ever seen, and that the persons who were with me might thank me for going away as they did. My ring was put next to the beautiful amethyst of which this same brigand had robbed Father John, Garibaldi's chaplain, when he was detained by them some two years before. I waited anxiously for the mandate to prepare to resume our route—for the evening would be coming on, and I was anxious for home and safety—when the brigand came up to me, and, taking me in his arms, embraced me most vehemently, telling me that I had amused him more than ever he was before; and, pointing to my husband and the others, he said, "Had it not been for you, they would now be lying there with the rest," pointing to a place where there had been a fire, and, as I afterwards knew, where they had burnt alive five unfortunate travellers!

He now called to his men to know if the vehicles were ready, and, finding they were, he told my fellow-travellers to seat themselves, detaining me until the last.

When all were ready, and my husband seated, the Capo, who had never allowed me to be five minutes without him, now took my hand to assist me into my seat. How my heart beat with thankfulness for our marvellous deliverance! At length I was seated by my husband's side, and the carriage-door shut upon us. "A rivederci, signorina: datemi la mano" (*Au revoir, madam: shake hands with me*). I thought myself quite safe; and, not able to help giving him a little of my mind, I said, "No, signore capitano; addio, non a rivederci; e per la mia mano, questo e le prima volta, e deve essere l'ultima volta che io te vedo, ma non voglio mai dar la mia mano a un brigante" (No, sir captain; *good-bye*, not *au revoir*; and, for shaking hands, this is the first time, and it is the last, I hope, that I shall see you, and I will not give my hand to a brigand). I had no sooner said the words than I deeply regretted my temerity; for, with an exclamation of rage, he pulled open the carriage-door, and commenced dragging me with no gentle force out of the carriage. My husband exclaimed, "Oh! signore capitano, forgive her, I pray you!" But he was not so easily to be appeased. He pulled me out of the carriage, and for the second time I was made to go down on my knees and beg his pardon, at the same time giving him my hand; and then, taking a gold Napoleon out of his pocket, with a hole in it, he gave it me, telling me to wear it in memory of him.

I promised everything, feeling sure that something else would happen if we did not get away, and, with a heartfelt prayer of thanksgiving to Almighty God for his signal mercy in thus saving us, as it were, out of the lion's mouth, we gladly proceeded on our journey. On passing through the next town, we met five unfortunate men whose ears had all been cut off close to their heads. To them I gave the gold Napoleon, and very thankful they were to receive it.

THE "GRAM" IN THE CITY.

The picture presented by the commercial highways of London at the present time is without a parallel in any other city in the world. During six days of the week

the whole of the City proper, and all the principal approaches to it, north, south, east, and west, are so crammed with vehicles of every description that a block or deadlock is imminent every moment, and in practice is always occurring at some portions or other of the various routes. The multiplication of vehicles during the life of the existing generation is so enormous as almost to exceed belief. Since the first London railway-station was opened the omnibuses have increased tenfold in number, and the cabs nearly five-fold, until we have omnibuses travelling about 72,000 miles a day, and 5000 cabs doing as much daily as 150,000 miles. Add to these the private carriages, the professional carriages, broughams, dog-carts, gigs, trade-traps, spring-carts, and the like, and the total of fast-going vehicles which traverse London daily would amount to between seven and eight thousand. Far greater, however, is the amount of the slow-going wheel traffic. No man has yet attempted to number the carts, waggons, wains, vans, drays, drags, etc., engaged in the service of trade and commerce, and which are constantly traversing the metropolis from early dawn till long after dark. Some of them are of enormous bulk and weight, so that their very passage past one's dwelling shakes the room in which we sit, and they move necessarily at so tardy a pace as to stem the rushing tide in their rear and enjoy a monopoly of the road.

What is most observable in this multitudinous medley of vehicles is that every one of them seems moved solely by its own resolution to get on, or not to get on, as it may be, and to act as far as it possibly can totally regardless of the rest. For a time the counter-currents of wheels will be seen passing each other with something like regularity and order; but anon a heavy team of some sort, arrogant in its ponderosity, crushes into the dense mass from some side street, and, like the sudden fall of a rock into a stream, dams the current and brings to a stop the whole flow for a mile in its rear. It is unfortunate that the main avenues to the City are so abundantly fed by these small tributary streams running into them at a right angle: all the way from Charing Cross to the Bank, and away again farther east, that is the case, and every one of them pours in its contribution to swell the general confusion. Further to aggravate the muddle, comes the periodical repairing of the paving, or the removing of it for the sake of subterranean alterations or improvements; at these crises the flood of wheels, turned out of its normal channels, overflows into all sorts of by-places, carrying astonishment and dismay into hitherto undiscovered regions.

It is impossible rightly to estimate the annoyance and the loss to the Queen's lieges from this perennial condition of "gram;" there is no language that could give it utterance, no figures that could express its money value. The noise, hubbub, and din resulting from it create a kind of insane atmosphere, in the excitement of which the prime movers seem to revel, while the nervous and timid are often driven by it to their wits' end. The world on wheels lord it despotically over the world on foot, who often pay with life and limb for a trip of the foot in the slippery soil, or a slight miscalculation in distance. A writer of note once said that it was safer to cross the Atlantic Ocean than to cross Fleet Street; and really the Reports of the Registrar-General of late would seem to show that he had reason for his preference. It appears that last year 232 persons were killed by carriages in the streets of London. How many were injured we cannot say, for no record is taken of any but mortal hurts; but, if we make the allowance usual in such calculations, we shall certainly reach a

total of 1000 casualties. It would require a railway accident of the most disastrous kind every week in the year to produce such a return. The actual deaths from all causes registered in the City of London proper during an ordinary quarter do not exceed a year's work in the streets. We pride ourselves as a people upon the value we attach to human life, and we sometimes point to our coroners' inquests as a proof of it, but certainly this hideous slaughter does not justify such a pride. In most Continental cities* the by-laws for the protection of foot-passengers are considerate and stringent. In St. Petersburg, where everybody save the lowest classes rides, accidents by wheel carriages are almost totally unknown, for the simple reason that, in that barbarous land, if a driver were to knock down a pedestrian, he would be arrested, his vehicle impounded, and himself detained in prison until the result was known. If the injured person died, the carriage, with the horse or horses, and any property it contained, would be forfeit to the law, and the driver, if proved guilty, sent to Siberia; if the injured person recovered, he would be compensated for his hurt before the driver was freed and his property restored to him. In London there is no real protection for the pedestrian; it may almost be said that the crowds on foot are surrendered to the mercy of any man or boy in charge of cart or carriage, who may ride them down with impunity. In many cases the driver who kills or maims a man, woman, or child, is allowed to pursue his route, and is never called to account. Sometimes, when the case is flagrant, he is detained and brought up for judgment, and gets off with a reprimand, or not even as much as that. In the newspapers of November last a case is reported of a poor woman thrown down by a cart and wounded to death, and dying a short time after; the driver was taken into custody, and was tried by an "enlightened British jury." It was shown in evidence that the offender was drunk at the time, and was driving furiously; but the enlightened jury (the majority of whom, it is presumable, had carts and drivers of their own traversing the city) could not see that the death of the poor woman was connected with the conduct of the driver, and he was, of course, allowed to go free. The verdict was, in effect, though disguised in decent periphrasis, "It was the woman's fault—she ought to have got out of the way;" and, had it been thus phrased, it would have expressed the exact amount of solicitude which the authorities in the City entertain for the lives of the citizens. In the interests of commerce human life is held cheap: to forge a man's signature means penal servitude till death, but to ride him down and slaughter him outright means next to nothing, unless the relatives of the slain are rich enough to go to law, and the slayer be worth powder and shot. We do not hesitate to assert, that if a law which made drivers duly responsible ruled in the streets of London, the two hundred and odd deaths in a year from this cause would be reduced to less than twenty.

Meanwhile, what is to be done? That is the question everybody is asking, and to which no one is able to render a satisfactory reply. The widening of the streets presents itself as the obvious remedy; but in London

* We are sorry to learn from the accounts in the French papers that the streets of Paris are becoming almost as dangerous as those of London. This is partly owing to the fact that the Paris omnibuses do not confine themselves to the broad lines of route, but run through the city in every direction, traversing the narrowest thoroughfares and the most populous quarters. The French papers, by way of checking the recklessness of drivers, have adopted the measure of reporting all cases of such accidents as they take place. Our own journals ought to do as much in behalf of the public.

that means the pulling down of houses: we cannot remove our houses as they stand, as the Americans sometimes do, seeing that it is our invariable practice to build them partly underground. Further, much as the necessity of widening the City thoroughfares has been talked and written about, it is very plain that the Corporation cannot carry it out to any great extent, owing to the abnormal value of the land; we see in the busiest thoroughfares that, narrow as they are, new structures are being raised of a rich, florid massiveness, and consequent cost, that forbid the idea of their removal, while they are reared for the most part on the exact site of the old ones, flush with the boundaries of the narrow streets. Wherever the widening process does go on, it is at so slow and almost imperceptible a rate that the amount of relief it affords is not even commensurate with the increase of traffic during its progress.

The formation of new street routes promises better, and where these have been completed the benefit has been marked, and will be permanent, as in the case of Cannon Street in the City, and New Oxford Street towards the west. The broad routes in preparation along the Thames embankment will perhaps do more to relieve the crowding in the main avenues than anything which has yet been undertaken, but ere these are completed a considerable time must elapse. Much reliance has been placed upon the intramural railways, which, it was supposed, would take off immense numbers from the streets; but in practice it has been found that railways create their own traffic, and, beyond crowding the neighbourhood of their several stations, produce little appreciable effect. It may, therefore, be reasonably expected that, when all the railways in formation have got their stations finished, and their lines fairly opened, the streets will be more crowded than ever, when they will of course become more worn and more frequently under repair, so that the existing state of cram will be further aggravated. This condition of things was foreseen thirty years ago, and about that time an enterprising individual made persevering efforts to obtain permission to guard against it, but in vain; for more than a dozen years he petitioned Parliament for leave to bring in a Bill for the construction of subways through the chief metropolitan routes. By his plan the streets would never be disturbed for subterranean purposes of any kind, as all underground operations would have been carried on in hollow galleries arched over; and he had a provision for the repairs of the roadway when needed—such repairs being effected without difficulty in the early hours of the morning, and never needing to interfere with the daily traffic; but this admirable scheme was destined only to a partial realization after a long and wearisome delay. We believe it was carried into effect in some of the short new streets in the vicinity of Leicester Square.

One method of relieving the cram and crush, which seems too obvious to escape notice, has yet, so far as we know, been but little tried. We refer to such restrictions upon the traffic as, in the interests of the public, might be fairly enforced. Some restriction should apply to all goods vans and waggons plying between railway-stations; or, if that were too much, they should be thrust into by-routes, under regulations for going and returning devised so as to prevent blocking. Carts delivering goods might be subjected to like laws, and prevented from blocking the way for hours, as they often do on the slightest pretences. Then an end should be put to the perambulations of crawling cabs plying for hire, which are the occasions of innumerable accidents; and, lastly, all funeral processions along the trade lines

should be abolished, fit depositaries being opened for the reception of the dead, who should be removed thither by night previous to interment.

The most popular of the plans, however, which have been thought of is that for the organization of the traffic, so that all travelling vehicles, of whatever description, should travel at a prescribed pace, and keep to their proper part of the road. This has been carried out on London Bridge, where all the slow and heavy carriages take the two sides next the kerb, while the faster ones run along the central space. On a bridge, where there can be no necessity for stopping, this system can be easily adopted; but it would be vain to attempt to enforce it in a populous street, where the waggons and carts would stop to deliver goods, and in stopping would bring everything in their rear to a stand, and where omnibuses and cabs would be requiring to draw up at the kerb, to set down and take up fares. Any plan of organization, therefore, which seeks to remedy existing evils must differ materially from that which has made London Bridge passable, and must, it seems to us, in order to be effectual, involve the construction of "sideways," in which the delivering vehicles could draw up out of the way of the general traffic while unloading goods. Such a plan, moreover, could hardly be devised which allowed to omnibuses their present practice of stopping to take up or set down at any moment, and at any part of their route; the public would have to forego this convenience along the "organised" route, and be content to do as the passengers on the Thames penny boats do—to get in and out of the conveyances only at the appointed stations for stopping. The hardship of this would be but trifling, and would be more than compensated by the regularity and punctuality which would follow on the change of system.

The new Bill for the regulation of the City traffic, promoted by the Corporation, seeks for powers to carry into effect some of the alterations above suggested, and others analogous to them. The framers of the Bill are evidently quite aware of the difficulties which will have to be met in the execution of their purpose; and they ask only for power to make such by-laws as shall be judged to be necessary, and to vary, alter, or repeal them from time to time as they may deem expedient. The Court of Aldermen will have to resort only to tentative measures in the first instance, and must be content to gather, from the experience of repeated trials, that practical acquaintance with the subject which alone will enable them to deal with it effectually. Looking to what has to be done, to the proposed means of doing it, and to the obstacles which stand in the way, we fear that the reform so highly desiderated is yet a long way off.

We have been moved to the above remarks on the wretched state of our City locomotion by the perusal of a prospectus proposing to renew the attempt, made by Mr. Train some few years back, to introduce tramways for the passage of large and convenient omnibuses along the principal London thoroughfares. We have nothing to say, *pro* or *con.*, about the details of the new plan, which must stand or fall on its own merits, but we have a grateful recollection of the convenience we reaped from the use of Mr. Train's omnibuses in Westminster years ago; and we have no idea what were the grounds on which they were opposed and eventually abolished—our ignorance being shared, we suspect, by thousands of the public who regret their loss. Whatever the faults of Mr. Train's scheme were, we are assured that they have all been obviated in the new one. If that is true, perhaps London, after all, will be allowed the same advantages

which have been so long enjoyed in the American cities and in Paris, in which latter city we have often been but too glad to take refuge in the huge tram-omnibuses after a weary perambulation of the tortuous streets. One evident advantage of the tramways would be the cheapening of locomotion to the public, since the relative number of horses required would be reduced by more than a third, as would also the number of salaried drivers and conductors. If it be objected that the tramway scheme might prove a monopoly, it might be said in reply that that would depend upon the conditions of the Act of Parliament under which it would have to be carried into execution. At any rate, omnibus locomotion in London is pretty much a monopoly now, and the last things thought of are the reduction of the high fares and the convenience of those who pay them.

More than ten years ago the cabmen in London struck work on a certain day; the omnibus proprietors seized the opportunity on some lines of route to add twenty-five per cent. to their charges; and although, since then, the turnpikes have been removed, by which they have saved immense sums, the fares augmented in consequence of the cabmen's strike have never been abated.

We trust, however, that, if the tramways are to be again laid down, the thing will be done quietly and gradually, and the system be allowed to feel its way as there is a demand for it. We have no wish to see a new element of confusion added to those which already tend to render the metropolis impassable; and such assuredly would be the pulling up of the *pavé*, and the hying down of the tramways over miles of road at a time.

THE POETRY OF THE BIBLE.

IV.

THE SEVERAL KINDS OF BIBLE POETRY, WITH SPECIMENS OF THE LYRIC, DESCRIPTIVE, AND ELEGIAC.

Looking upon the Bible only as a collection of literary works, and leaving out of consideration, for the present, its higher character as a Divine revelation, designed to make us "wise unto salvation," it may be accepted as comprising a large variety of very beautiful poetry, some of it excelling in certain high qualities everything else extant.

We must not look into the Bible for that form of poetry which we call dramatic, nor for that denominated epic; for, after all that has been written in favour of the dramatic structure of the book of Job and of the Song of Solomon, the evidence fails, while the reasons against it are very strong. Nor is Job more of an epic, in the strict sense of that word, than it is of a drama.

Whether the Hebrew literature included these forms of composition, is more than we can now say. The Bible, as was shown in a former paper, comprises only such portions of it as the Divine Head of the Church has preserved (1) to make known his relationship to the world, and especially to men—his judgment on the apostate antediluvians, his gracious dealings with the post-diluvian patriarchs, the introduction, establishment, and decline of the Hebrew Theocracy, the advent and consummation of the Redeemer's mission, and the laying of the foundation of his universal Church, by the sending forth of the apostles; and (2) to confer on the Church and on the world all those blessings of knowledge and of spiritual life, instruction, and comfort which the Christology of the Prophets and the Psalms, with its other Divine compositions, are calculated to confer. The Hebrew literature may have included dramatic and epic poetry, which are lost to us, although we agree with those

writers who think that the drama was a species of composition never cultivated by the Hebrews. The theatre was not known in Judea till the time of Herod the Great, and then it was scarcely tolerated by even the degenerate Jews.

But, excepting the dramatic and the epic, we have almost every other form of poetry in the sacred writings: the lyrical, the elegiac, the descriptive, the gnomic or sententious, and the pastoral; and a considerable variety of each of these.

Of Lyric Poetry—that is, compositions intended to be sung or accompanied by music—we have every kind, from the simplest song or hymn to the more sublime and impassioned ode. We find this form of composition here and there in the earlier books of the Old Testament; but the collection which we know as the book of Psalms, sometimes called the "Psalms of David," because he is believed to have written the greater part of them, comprises, as all competent critics admit, lyric compositions of the highest degree of perfection.

Of Pastoral Poetry there are many sweet and elegant specimens in the Psalms and in the Prophets, as also in the Song of Solomon, which is a series of pastoral idylls, like the *Cassides* of the Arabian poets.

Descriptive Poetry, which is said to furnish the great test of poetic power, and to distinguish an original from a second-rate genius, abounds in the Old Testament. A true poet, says Blair, makes us imagine that we see the object he describes standing before our eyes; while an inferior poet sees nothing new or peculiar in the object he would portray, and gives us words rather than ideas: the higher genius catches its distinguishing features, gives it the colours of life and reality, and places it in such a light that a painter could copy after him.

The oldest book in the Bible furnishes many specimens of this style of composition, and more than one of them may be favourably compared with anything elsewhere to be found. Take, for example, the vision of Eliphaz, in the fourth chapter.

In the dead hour of the night, when all living creatures were buried in sleep, and all nature was shrouded in darkness, Eliphaz was lying sleeplessly on his couch, amidst the profound silence which reigned around. Suddenly and unexpectedly a supernatural being enters his apartment. It is an image, but without any defined form—a gliding spectre. It speaks in hollow voice, like the whispers of the wind. So great was his terror that all his bones shook. There stood the shadowy spectre, and there crouched the patriarch, his hair standing erect with fear. In the midst of the profound silence, a low murmuring voice is heard, and a message, as sublime as it is impressive, is uttered.

Let us look at this sublimely terrific scene, as well as we can get at it through a translation, which necessarily falls short of the great power and life-like vigour of the original:—

"A matter was imparted to me secretly:

It came to my ears like a muttering sound

In the terrifying hour of night visions.

At the time when deep sleep falleth upon men,

A fear came upon me, and a horror;

A shivering went through all my bones;

Then a spirit glided before me,

The hair of my flesh stood on end.

It stood still; but I could not distinguish its form.

A spectre stood before mine eyes—

There was stillness, so that I heard a hollow murmur, saying,

"Shall mortal man be just before God?

Shall a man be pure in the sight of his Maker?

Behold! He cannot confide in those who serve Him;

Even His angels He chargeth with deflection.

What, then, are the dwellers in tenements of clay,
Whose foundation is in the dust?
They are crushed before the moth;
They are destroyed from morning to evening;
They are for ever perishing unnoticed;
Their fluttering round is soon over;
They die quite destitute of wisdom."

It has been more than once and justly observed, that this passage has no parallel in all ancient and modern poetry. The apparition of Creusa, in the "*Æneid*," the phantom of the Cape in "*Camoens*," and the ghost in Shakespeare's "*Hamlet*," are all more or less terrific, but all fail when placed in comparison with this in Job.

Taken as a whole, this book is the most poetically descriptive of all the inspired writings. Almost everything described is rendered visible, and, if it admit of it, is animated with life.

In the book of Psalms there is much of this description of poetry, but it is generally of a more tender, though often of a magnificent kind. What a combination of the highest qualities of poetry, for example, does the nineteenth Psalm present—what sublimity of thought, what richness of imagery, what life and animation, and what exalted conceptions of God!

"The heavens declare the glory of God,
And the firmament proclaimeth the work of his hands.
Day after day it poureth forth instruction,
And night after night it pointeth out knowledge.
They have no speech nor language,
They have not an audible voice;
Yet their lessons go forth through all the earth,
And their eloquence to the utmost parts of the world!"

Those who want the sublime in description must look for it in these sacred books, the Psalms and the Prophets. There we find the sublimest objects, those that are vast, grand, awful, and solemn, described with all the strength, combined with all the conciseness and simplicity which seem necessary to give us distinct and deep impressions of them. Only as a sample of a large collection of this description of poetry we may take a portion of the eighteenth Psalm, in which we are almost overwhelmed by the assemblage of awful and sublime ideas the poet has brought together in his description of the Almighty, coming forth to rescue his servant from the hand of his enemies, when he had become so surrounded by them that all human aid seemed powerless as against them; the snares of death hemming him in, and the floods of ungodliness making him afraid. It was in this strait that he called upon the Lord, and cried aloud to his God. He thus describes the manner and results of the Divine interposition:—

"He heard my voice from his palace;
And my cry was present unto him;
It entered into his ears.
Then the earth shook and trembled,
And the foundations of the mountains tottered;
Yea, they mocked because of his wrath.
Smoke went up through his nostrils,
And devouring fire issued out of his mouth.
Burning coals came flaming from him.
He bowed the heavens, and came down,
And thick darkness was under his feet.
He rode upon the cherubim, and did fly,
And he soared upon the wings of the wind.
He shrouded himself in darkness;
The dark waters, clouds heaped upon clouds,
Were his pavilion round about him.
At the brightness before him,
His clouds passed away.
There were hailstones and clouds of fire!
The Lord thundered in the heavens,
And the Most High uttered his voice.
There were hailstones and clouds of fire!
He sent forth his arrows, and scattered them;
He hurled his lightnings, and discomfited them.
The channels of the waters were seen,
The foundations of the world were laid bare,
At thy rebuke, O Lord!
At the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.

"He put forth his hand from on high, he took hold on me;
He drew me out of mighty waters.
He delivered me from my powerful enemies."

Similar descriptions of the Lord's special interposition for the deliverance of his people are to be found in the Prophets, and are, indeed, terribly sublime, although their full force and significance will not be perceived by those who do not bear in mind the descriptions which we have in the book of Exodus and elsewhere of the peculiar symbols of the Divine presence—clouds and darkness, and fire and smoke, and terrible voices—which overwhelmed with fright and panic those who saw and heard them.

How exquisitely, too, do the inspired poets pourtray still life; how vividly do they paint natural scenery; what life do they infuse into every part of the creation, from the modest flower in the field to the refulgent sun in the heavens!

Of Elegiac Poetry the Scriptures of the Old Testament present us with many beautiful specimens. David's lamentation over his friend Jonathan is often referred to, as an exquisite example of this style of composition; but there are others by the same author equally beautiful, dispersed throughout the book of Psalms.

But the most perfect elegiac compositions in the Bible are what are called the "Lamentations" of Jeremiah, than which there never was brought together a greater diversity of beautiful, tender, and pathetic images, most happily chosen and applied, and all expressive of the deepest distress and sorrow. Blair, and other competent critics, have pronounced them to be the most perfect elegiac compositions, not only in the sacred writings, but in the whole world.

Regarded merely in an artistic point of view, the composition of these elegies is remarkable. They are five in number, and each is divided into twenty-two stanzas or verses. The first three consist of triplets, each triplet beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the twenty-two letters commencing the stanzas in the regular order of the alphabet. The fourth elegy consists of couplets, the letters of the alphabet being employed in their regular order at the beginning of the several couplets. The fifth elegy is formed like the first three, of triplets, each beginning with a letter of the alphabet, and being twenty-two in number; but the letters here are not arranged in alphabetical order. This Divine mechanism is not without its uses, though it does not fall within our province here to treat of them.

Looking simply at the poetry of these Lamentations, they may well have been pronounced to rank with the finest compositions of their kind. See with what a graceful and pathetic flow of eloquence the prophet pours forth the effusions of a patriotic heart, and weeps over the ruins of his desolated country:—

"How does she sit solitary that was full of people:
She has become a widow that was great among the nations;
She that was sovereign over princes has become tributary!"

From the daughter of Zion all her splendour is departed;
Her princes are as harts that find no water,
And go powerless before the pursuer" (chap. i. ver. 1 and 6).

Similar in its pathos and descriptive power is the fourth elegy:—

"How hath the gold become dim! the fine gold changed!
The sacred stones are thrown down at the top of every street!

The precious stones of Zion, comparable to fine gold;
How they are regarded as earthen pitchers, the work of the potter's hands!"

So on, in the whole passage (chapter iv. 1—11). What a crowding of striking images! what a depth of pathetic feeling!